

COOPER'S HAWK ATTACKS SHARP-TAILED GROUSE

by

D. L. J. Moyles¹

10315 – 79 St.

Edmonton, Alberta

T6A 3G7 CANADA

On 21 April 1976, while observing the morning display of male Sharp-tailed Grouse (*Pedioecetes phasianellus*) on an arena 13 km (8 mi) west of Wainwright, Alberta (lat. 52°49'; long. 110°59'), P. Harris saw a female Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) attack an adult male sharptail. This attack came approximately one-half hour after sunrise; the hawk flew close to the ground from bushes 30 m from the arena and knocked the grouse off its feet. After a brief struggle in which the grouse lost some breast feathers, it escaped and flew off. The hawk did not pursue but instead flew onto a post. After 2 minutes it flew off.

Although Beebe (1974) reported that Cooper's Hawks do occasionally kill large birds, such as Ring-necked Pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*) and Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), it has not been reported to attack Sharp-tailed Grouse. Neither Artmann (1970) nor Brown (1970) saw Cooper's Hawks attempting to kill these grouse. However, Berger et al. (1963) reported one possible case of an adult male Greater Prairie Chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido pinnatus*) having been killed by a Cooper's Hawk. Both these species of grouse display on open ground and have been observed to crouch, then flush upon the approach of a Cooper's Hawk (Berger et al. 1963; pers. obs.). This may be a result of the grouse's mistaking the shape and flight pattern of a Cooper's Hawk for that of a Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) or because the incidence of attacks on grouse by Cooper's Hawks is sufficiently frequent that they are recognized as potential predators themselves.

I would like to acknowledge financial support from Department of Parks, Recreation and Wildlife, Province of Alberta, and from a National Research Council of Canada grant (2010) to D. A. Boag. R. Fyfe of Canadian Wildlife Service allowed me to use the CWS facilities at Wainwright. D. A. Boag made helpful suggestions on this note.

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1. Present address: Brooks Wildlife Center, Box 1540, Brooks, Alberta, CANADA T0J 0J0